News Release
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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT HOLDING PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE

Government Wants To Hear From Ontarians On 10-Year Strategic Plan

THUNDER BAY – The McGuinty government wants to hear from local residents as it develops a 10-year strategic plan for the province's health care system, Michael Gravelle, MPP for Thunder Bay-Superior North and Bill Mauro, the MPP for Thunder Bay-Atikokan announced today on behalf of Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman.

"Listening to Ontarians is essential to the development of a long-term plan for the province's health system because it is their system," Gravelle said. "Our government has made significant progress in increasing access to health care and bringing down wait times. We want to make sure our health system will be there for Ontarians in the future because we're in this together."

A public regional consultation will be held on Monday, March 5 at 4:00 p.m. at:

Lakehead University
ATAC Building, 6th Floor
Room 6022
Thunder Bay ON P7B 5Z8

The meeting in Thunder Bay is being hosted by Gravelle and Mauro, and speakers will include Dr. John Whitfield, Board Chair of the North West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN).

There will also be a number of other sites available where residents can watch by video- conferencing. These include:

North West Local Health Integration Network
975 Alloy Drive, Suite 201
Thunder Bay ON P7B 5Z8

Lake of the Woods District Hospital
21 Sylvan Street West
Kenora ON P9N 3W7

Dryden Regional Health Centre
58 Goodall Street
Dryden ON P8N 2Z6

La Verendrye Health Centre
110 Victoria Avenue

Fort Frances ON P9A 2B7

Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre
7th Avenue North
Sioux Lookout ON P8T 1C2

Geraldton District Hospital
500 Hogarth Avenue West
Geraldton ON P0T 1M0

Wilson Memorial General Hospital
26 Peninsula Road
Marathon ON P0T 2E0

Nipigon District Memorial Hospital
Multipurpose Room
125 Hogan Road
Nipigon ON P0T 2J0

The consultation will allow local residents an opportunity to have their say about the future of health care in Ontario, as well as front-line health care providers and organized health care groups. Members of the public who wish to attend or participate in the consultations can obtain more information by calling 1-866-968-9582 or by visiting www.register-ourplanforhealth.ca.

The 2.5-hour session will highlight the government's progress in building a stronger health care system in Ontario, health and social trends in the province, future system challenges and opportunities, and an overview of what the government and Local Health Integration Networks have already heard from the public.

Participants at the session will then be engaged in a dialogue about the important values and priorities that will shape Ontario's future health care system.

The regional consultation is just one of many ways that the government has been obtaining feedback from Ontarians on their health care priorities and concerns. Opinions have been collected through other meetings with health care stakeholders, telephone surveys, e-mails to a dedicated website (www.ourplanforhealth.ca) and through a toll-free phone line: 1-866-532-3161.

The consultation will be part of the development of a strategic plan, which is a commitment legislated under the Local Health System Integration Act. The plan will set out a vision, priorities and strategic directions for our health care system over the next 10 years.

"Developing a plan is a huge challenge and responsibility," said Mauro. "And we can't do it without listening to the thoughts, concerns and ideas from the people of Ontario."

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities - keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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